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Mountie for Over 47 Years Tells of Northwest Rebellion

A member of the Mounted Police for 47 years and eight months, longer than any one man living or dead has ever served, is the record of Dr. Edward A. Braithwaite, who is in Windsor attending the Ancient and Accepted Rite of Free Masonry. The doctor is attending the convention in the capacity of Masonic reeve of Alberta.

With the Masonic Lodge since 1893 and former master and grand master in Manitoba, Dr. Braithwaite, whose home has been in Edmonton for the last 52 years, is the third oldest member of the Masonic Order in Canada.

NORTHWEST REBELLION

Enlisting in Edmonton in 1884 with what was then the Northwest Mounted Police, the doctor told in an interview last night how he, with a group of other Mounted Police, went to Port Carlton in 1885 at the time of the Northwest Rebellion.

"I had only a year in the service at the time," the doctor reminisced. "As a student of medicine, I was sent up there as medical officer. And at Fort Carlton I was placed in charge of the wounded, who were from the Battle of Duck Lake, which was the first of a series of skirmishes in the rebellion."

With a contingent of the force, the doctor said, they were then posted back to Prince Albert where they stayed for a number of months.

"Still as a medical officer, I was then sent out with two other constables to Hudson's Bay Crossing to bring in wounded men off the steamer Northwestern. These men were wounded in a battle which took place in that area."

With 25 other members of the Royal Northwest Mounted Police, Doctor Braithwait told how they went on to Batoche where he was put in charge of placing wounded men aboard boats.

The doctor explained that Batoche was where the police were ambushed by the rebels.

"The wounded men of Batoche," he said, "were removed by boat and sled to a base hospital which was situated where the City of Saskatoon now stands."

Later posted to Fort Carlton, the doctor mentioned, he saw that fort destroyed by fire before he was moved back to Regina.

TRAILED TWO KILLERS

"From there I was sent with two men to Lesser Slave Lake to pick up two murderers. This trip took 29 days but now can be completed in an hour or two by airplane. The pair, a father and his son, were not murderers in our sense of the word," Dr. Braithwait said.

"In line with the Cree Indian tradition, the kin of an insane person must eliminate this member of the family. This the Indians described with a word 'Wehtigo' and that was the nature of the crime of the two I trailed."

The doctor said he was later made contract doctor for the Mounted Police and was stationed at various localities across the Dominion, and that while he was with the service it changed its name from the Northwest Mounted Police to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

Retiring in 1931, the grand old man of the Mounted Police said that in recognition of his long service the organization honored him by leaving his name on the nominal roll of officers.

With a chuckle he asked: "Do you know what I'm doing now? I'm the chief coroner for Alberta."

Mountie for over 47 years

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